THE TOP RUNNERS' QUARTERLY

Newsletter of the Top Runners' Conference, The Official **Netrunner**® Players' Organization

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The TRC FAQ v1.0

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What is the Top Runners' Conference?
The Top Runners' Conference (TRC) is a fan club for the game **Netrunner**, supported and officially recognized by the game's publisher, Wizards of the Coast® (WotC). The TRC is made up of **Netrunner** fans from around the world – not merely players, but people who wish to help spread interest and participation in the game. The TRC is named after the card of the same name from **Netrunner**.

What are the goals of the TRC?
Play **Netrunner**. Encourage other people to play **Netrunner**. That's it.

How do we achieve those goals?
Ah! Organize and/or run demonstrations of **Netrunner**, run tournaments, publicize, promote. The more **Netrunner** is seen, the more interest we will see in the game. With more interest, more **Netrunner** product will be sold. With a consistent demand for the product, WotC might move **Netrunner** back into production.

Is the TRC a group of WotC salespeople then?
No!! All we want to do is get people to play **Netrunner**. We like the game, and we want other people to like it too, so we have more people to play with. Everything else is incidental.

Why do you all like Netrunner so much anyway?
Many aspects of **Netrunner** attract us to it. These include the aspects of bluff and counterbluff, the large number of competitive deck design strategies, the general straightforward game play, the excellent artwork, and the overall feel of the **Netrunner** world.

What is the status of Netrunner?
Netrunner is officially on Wizards of the Coast's "maintenance list." This means that the game is being supported at a minor level, but there is no active research and development work, production, or advertising of the game. **Netrunner** may be moved to the "active list" at any time in the future, meaning further production, but probably only if sales improve.

Why is Netrunner on the maintenance list?
This was a decision made by WotC when it became clear that **Netrunner** was not living up to sales expectations. **Netrunner** is currently not profitable enough to justify continued production. With active promotion by the TRC, however, this decision could be reviewed at any time.

What support for Netrunner is available?
A WotC staff member, Jennifer Clarke Wilkes, is involved in promoting **Netrunner**. She helps the **Netrunner** community by providing product for demos and tournaments, answering questions about **Netrunner**, and bouncing around ideas for the further promotion and spread of the game.

I'm running a tournament. Can I get some Netrunner product for prizes?
Yes! Just send Jennifer the details of the tournament, well in advance. There is a standard prize package consisting of a rare **Netrunner** card signed by Richard Garfield, starters, and boosters. Check out Jennifer's article on the next page.

Will there be sanctioned Netrunner tournaments?
Not in the near future. For now, TRC plans on having its own form of "sanctioning" which is still being worked out. Plan for it to include Matthias Nagy's **Netrunner** rankings.

Are there any new expansions on the way?
We know that WotC is (nearly) done with an expansion called *Silent Impact*™, but is not planning on releasing it unless sales improve. We also have heard rumors of two or three other expansions which are nearly complete. One of these, "Rogues," was designed by and sold to WotC by **Netrunner** guru Byron Massey.

Can we distribute new card ideas?
Members of the TRC are free to invent and distribute new **Netrunner** cards via personal channels. However, for legal reasons, neither Jennifer nor any other WotC employee may inspect card ideas. Therefore, card ideas may not be distributed on any official TRC publication.

Welcome to the Top Runners' Conference!

It's good to see so many fans of Richard Garfield's **Netrunner** getting together in support of the game. A grassroots movement is underway, and you are part of the revolution.

We've put together this introductory newsletter to make you aware of the resources available to you. It lists the major contacts around the world for locations where **Netrunner** is played. Also, if you have computer access, you can visit our website, or sign up for the **Netrunner** mailing list.

The TRC grows daily, as more people discover the charm of **Netrunner**. You will periodically receive a newsletter that updates the list of contacts. Also, be ready to score articles discussing strategy and play of **Netrunner**.

So jack in, watch out for tags, and join your fellow runners around the world. I'm looking forward to meeting you in netspace.

Robert G. Flack
Robert "Argi" Flack
Chair, Top Runners' Conference

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Running a Tournament:
What You Need to Know

by Jennifer Clarke Wilkes
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So you're pumped about **Netrunner**® and you want to put on a tournament. What now?

Well, the most obvious first step is to secure a location. If possible, try to work with your local game retailer. You'll need enough space to seat six to eight pairs of players. If the store has gaming space, so much the better. But if not, you may still be able to have the retailer sponsor your event in exchange for publicity. Libraries, community centers, schools, and even shopping malls are likely places to find space without having to pay a fee.

You'll also need to arrange a date and time. Try for two to three weeks' notice so you can advertise and secure prize materials. A typical Swiss-draw tournament of four rounds will probably take five to six hours, depending on the deck format and the experience of your players, so make sure you start fairly early.

Advertise your event! Take advantage of community newspapers and bulletin boards. Post something to a newsgroup. If you or the retailer have a Web page, it makes an excellent advertisement node.

I'd recommend sealed-deck tournaments to start with. A constructed-deck environment can be very intimidating. Besides, **Netrunner** plays so well out of the box that it is perfect for sealed-deck play. It's also more approachable by people you have just taught. As well, it helps the retailer, since people will probably have to buy cards.

People play in tournaments for fun, but it adds a lot to have a shot at winning something. Cards make fine prizes. Maybe your retailer will be able to provide some materials. As well, Wizards of the Coast supports tournaments: to request prize support, you can email me at

<gadget@wizards.com>

or speak to your local TRC chair. The prize packages are sent by parcel post, so allow two weeks or so for delivery in the continental US, and somewhat longer for international destinations.

A good way to prepare the gaming community for your tournament is to hold demos in the preceeding weeks. (See Doug Caspian-Kaufman's article.) You can get demo support materials like posters, flyers, playmats, and cards from me as well.

On the day of the tournament, try to arrive about an hour early to set things up. You can also use this time to do a demo or two. If possible, bring a copy of the card rulings and rules errata with you. Tricky rules questions don't tend to come up often, but it's good to be prepared.

I don't recommend playing in a tournament you run, but if there is an independent person available to resolve rules questions (such as the retailer), this can work. If you have an odd number of players, you can play whoever has a bye that round. Or strip out a starter and challenge all comers.

Above all, have fun!

How to Stage a Demo

by Doug Caspian-Kaufman
`<rabbismall@aol.com>`

I have found that in explaining the game, the following sequence works quite well:

1) Start with the Corp deck: Explain the starting setup, and the concept of actions. I usually say, "The Corp gets four actions per turn, but the first must *always* be to draw a card." The details of why this is not technically an action I save for later.

2) The first and most important thing is scoring agenda. It's what the game is all about. So I play Corp turns, one after the other, just to place an agenda, advance it, take bits, etc., until it is scored. I say, "When the Corp has scored 7 agenda points this way, it wins the game."

3) So... what does the Runner player do to stop this? I then explain that he or she also gets four actions, but none are prescribed, and that there is a new type of action: the run. With a partially advanced Corp agenda on the table, I demonstrate the effects of a run on R&D, HQ, and the subsidiary data forts. I point out that if the Runner scores 7 agenda points this way, he or she wins the game.

4) Then it's back to the Corp. How does it prevent the Runner from scoring agenda? Now it's time for the concept of ice, rezzing and the full run sequence (approaching ice, rezzing or not, effect of subroutines). It helps to slap down some non-icebreaker program and talk about trashing programs, Net, meat, and brain damage, and "end the run." I leave out trace ice at this point (that comes later). Flatlining as a method of Corp victory gets mentioned here.

5) So how does the Runner get through this ice? Now it's time for icebreakers. With icebreakers come MU restrictions, how to pump strengths and break subroutines, the calculation of bit costs, etc.

6) Finally I get to traces and tags, base link, and increases to link.

This completes the basic concepts. You will still need to talk about nodes and upgrades, chips and decks, and a whole bunch more, but I've found that this back and forth sequence makes it clear at each step *why* we are talking about the concepts we are talking about. The rest is a matter of reading the cards. Good luck!

What Is the Netrunner-L Listserv?

by David Morgan-Mar
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If you're wondering where the hot gossip and latest **Netrunner** news can be found on the Net, you should subscribe to the Netrunner-L mailing list. This listserver, run by Wizards of the Coast, is an active and lively discussion group, where the latest deck designs are discussed, tournament details and results are posted, and card name puns traded.

From the classic days of Tag 'n' Bag to Dominating the World, the cutting edges of deck design have first come to notice via this list. Rules wrinkles are ironed out, card combos suggested and dissected, and everyone kept up to date with the spread of the **Netrunner** virus.

For your dose of the latest **Netrunner** news and discussion, simply send an e-mail message to

`<listserv@oracle.wizards.com>`

with the message **subscribe netrunner-l** in the message body. Confirmation and listserv documentation will be returned to you almost immediately.

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If you have any suggestions on how to improve this newsletter, of if you would like to contribute an article, please contact the editor, Scott Dickie, at `<sdickie@pcisys.net>`